The Scope of Classical Scholarship *A Short History of Classical Scholarship*. Twenty-six illustrations. By Sir John Sandys. Pp. xvi + 456. 8vo. The University Press, Cambridge, 1915. 7s. 6d. net.

Frank Granger

The Classical Review / Volume 30 / Issue 02 / March 1916, pp 51 - 52
DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X00009811, Published online: 27 October 2009

leid of some 2,000 lines, in which Achilles relents to Agamemnon's envoys. It differs remarkably from other Achilleids, as by the inclusion of practically the whole of the first *Iliad* unexpurgated and nearly the whole of the ninth, not excluding the references to the Wall, which is, however, only *murus humilis*. The sponsor for this new version of the *Kern* says as much for its theme as can be said, but his attempted refutation of the old objection that the protagonist does nothing but rage and talk is futile. The tremendous reply to the envoys is shorn of all its glory and reduced to a miserable 35 lines, and one must hope, for the credit of the old bards, that they did not perpetrate the sudden change to a quiet acceptance of the enemy's gifts which is now suggested, or anything like the present feeble transition to the Reconciliation, with which the restored poem abruptly ends. This Achilleid will hardly find acceptance.

Its conversion into an *Iliad* was the work of many later hands. The one completing poetical agency for which Dr. Bethe argues so earnestly is not discovered or required. Such are the divergent results of the application of a method which seems to allow no licence and to show no mercy to the poetry examined, and in fact appears to forget that the subject of the criticism *is* poetry. Homeric students can learn something from both treatises, but neither provides us with a satisfactory substitute for the 'deplorable "Homer" of the unitarians'—which is the recent epesbolism of a Homerist embittered by the futility of the apophthegm that figures can prove anything.

A. SHEWAN.

THE SCOPE OF CLASSICAL SCHOLARSHIP.

A Short History of Classical Scholarship. Twenty-six illustrations. By Sir JOHN SANDYS. Pp. xvi + 456. 8vo. The University Press, Cambridge, 1915. 7s. 6d. net.

THE other morning I received a letter from a familiar correspondent, in which he confesses that he has once more attacked the Iliad, and has once more been wearied to boredom. He is piqued by the enthusiasm for the classical literatures, which furnishes the mainspring of the history of classical scholarship, and from time to time sets out to discover the secret of this enthusiasm. I have read Sir John Sandys' admirable abridgment of his great history, with an eye upon the case of my friend and upon the many others whom he represents. My friend quotes with a spice of malice Monsieur Le Bon, who, in *The Psychology of the Crowd*, asserts that 'for a modern reader the work of Homer disengages an incontestable ennui: but who would dare to say so?' The book before us, however, begins and ends upon the note of Homer, and is therefore in loud disaccord with these outside opinions.

Sir John Sandys has taken for granted the supreme merit of the tradition enshrined in the Greek and Roman languages, and has allowed the grounds for this pre-eminence to appear incidentally. For this reserve I am grateful. The slight amount of rhetoric which lights up these pages is just enough to give a relish to the dry banquet set before us. Mere praise, as distinct from a careful judgment of value, is almost an impertinence when we are in the presence of great names; although from my friend's case it would appear that the classical enthusiast must always have an apologia available. For that matter Keats' Sonnet has done more for Homeric Studies in England than any professed work of Scholarship.

It is no longer possible for even the most devoted student to take all classical learning for his province. But with this history before us we can proceed, each in our own line, with the full confidence that in most other fields we have comrades upon whose work we may rely to supplement the deficiencies and cover the defects, of our own. There is, therefore, no excuse for the mere amateur who wastes his time upon what, as he may find out, has already been done better than anything which

he can hope to achieve. But what is the special mark of the amateur in this whole field? I imagine that Sir John Sandys has really acted upon the precedent of Bernhardy (p. 333), who, in his *System of Classical Learning*, treated Grammar as the organon, the indispensable instrument. An amateur therefore here is the *illiteratus*. An adequate command of grammatical usage throughout its entire range characterises the typical scholar—a Bentley, a Porson, a Lachmann, a Munro.

But since the sentence occupies in its analysis nearly the whole time of the grammarian, it is possible to be an excellent scholar within purely grammatical limits, and yet to fail in the higher ranges of criticism and interpretation. Now, the ultimate test of a critic is the extent to which he can so far enter into the spirit of a writer as almost to put himself in his place. And indeed this is the justification of the English tradition which insists on the power to compose in the classical languages as part of the outfit of the scholar who is to be a critic. Unless Munro had been able to write good Latin verses, he would have been less successful with his edition of *Lucretius* (p. 409).

Why is it, nevertheless, that familiarity with the great literatures of antiquity is so rarely conjoined with the power of original production? My manual of English literature has no room for the names of Porson and Munro. But—admirable trait—it inserts Isaac Watts and leaves out Theodore Watts-Dunton. We have no criticism worth mention, only cliques. On the other hand, therefore, the classical amateur passes muster sometimes in the outside world by his unimportant studies. The same manual informs me of the years that were distinguished by Mr. Gladstone's work on *Homer*, or by Sir Theodore Martin's translation of *Catullus*. What is the clue that can guide us in this confusion?

The answer is this: the sentence which occupies the grammarian with its analysis corresponds to the psychological unit. There is no mental process which normally answers to a single part of speech apart from the sentence. In Chinese, I am told, no word exists apart from the sentence. Hence the grammarian, like the pure mathematician, deals with a subject-matter of an abstract character, in which he forms hypotheses from which certain conclusions follow. Only so far as the grammarian goes outside grammar into probable studies, history and literary criticism, does he attain the humanities. But the certainty of grammar—I speak as an 'analogist' (p. 39)—did not guard Bentley when he worked on a subject-matter in which his results could be freely canvassed, nor Rutherford when he re-wrote *Thucydides*. Neither Bentley nor, with less excuse, Rutherford realised the tendency of scholarship, in this respect, to distort the judgment. The sphere of emendation, however, is now controlled by a closer knowledge of the text. At the same time the methods of interpretation are enriched from sources which lie outside grammar. I could imagine, therefore, a history of scholarship which traced beyond the individual life the successive stages through which the knowledge of classical antiquity was attained. This would not, indeed, be a series of biographies such as those which lie before us. But it would find in Sir John Sandys' pages an excellent foundation, a Plutarch, if we may confuse chronography, offering materials to a Thucydides.

FRANK GRANGER.

University College, Nottingham.